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ABSTRACT

In an effort to determine the causes of student attrition, a study was conducted at American River College (ARC) in December 1979, involving: (1) a survey of 1,174 students who had dropped at least one class while at ARC, and (2) a categorization of the reasons for college withdrawal indicated by 591 students on ARC's standardized withdrawal form. The survey instrument, administered to high enrollment day and evening classes, asked students to rate the importance of 42 items with regard to their decisions to drop past classes. Since there were no withdrawal forms for evening students at ARC, their reasons could not be included in the college withdrawal analysis. Study findings indicated that students dropped courses for predominantly academic reasons. The most commonly cited were "course content too difficult," "subject matter not what expected," "could not keep up with course work," and "boring presentation by the instructor." College withdrawal, however, was motivated by non-academic reasons, such as financial/employment problems, moving, ill health, personal problems, and transferring to another school. The study report includes a literature review, an examination of the funds lost by ARC due to attrition, recommendations for improved grading and instructional techniques designed to reduce class drops, and the questionnaire. (JP)

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WHY STUDENTS DROP CLASSES AND WITHDRAW FROM AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE

by

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March, 1980

JC 800 245

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Dick Rasor

ABSTRACT

The reasons for dropouts from college along with characteristics of students who exercise this option has been studied extensively over the years. However, there is relatively little published on why students drop a class or two but who remain in college. Revenue loss of State funding applies to both types of drops--the class drop as well as the student who has withdrawn from college. Furthermore, a high rate of class drops suggest something inherently wrong with certain educational practices. For these reasons, 1174 students who had dropped at least one class were surveyed on 42 possible reasons for class drops. In addition, another 591 student withdrawal forms were categorized by reason. The top five reasons for class drops in rank order were: Course content too difficult, conflict between demands of job and course, subject matter not what expected, got too far behind in course work,instructor's presentation boring. The main reasons for withdrawing from college were: financial/employment, moving, ill health, personal problems, transferring to another school. The findings suggest that students do not withdraw from college for predominately academic reasons (only 4% did), whereas class drops are clearly related to academia.

If reducing attrition is an institutional goal, energy should be expended mostly on reducing class drops. Recommendations relating to major reasons include reassessing course demands, modularizing certain courses, more preregistration information about classes and instructors, more student feedback to instructors, more frequent evaluation of students and non-competitive grading.

Studying attrition phenomena in colleges is hardly a new idea. The literature on this topic is vast, and probably every college has concerned itself with the problem at some time. It is right that there be concern too, for class drops or total withdrawals (dropping all classes and leaving college) can be symptomatic of a defect in the accomplishment of institutional objectives. American River College in its 1979-80 Catalog, states the following philosophy: "Every student or potential student, irrespective of racial background, sex, or age has intrinsic worth and an inherent right to reach the highest degree of personal development." While some might perceive class drops due to academic reasons as a positive growth experience for the students, it is this author's opinion that for the majority of class drops, it represents a failure of the educational system to maximize the probability of success for its students. Educational establishments must maintain academic standards but also be willing to adapt to a dynamic population whose needs are continually changing. The open door philosophy of California's community colleges may in fact be a "revolving door" for many students. While there are students who withdraw and later return (stopouts), a large number of them do not complete their goals and do not return because the college experience was an unpleasant one.

During the Spring of 1979, the California State Legislature granted a block sum of money to Los Rios Community College District (American River is one of its colleges), to conduct its business. Normally, the Legislature uses an A.D.A.based formula and has since returned to that.[1] Had ARC been

1. Using $1100 as an A.D.A.income unit, the formula is:

$$\left(\frac{\begin{matrix}\text{Census}\\ \text{WSCH}\\ \text{4thweek}\end{matrix} \quad \begin{matrix}\text{Census}\\ \text{WSCH}\\ \text{11thwk}\end{matrix}}{2}\right) \div 15(.911)(\$1100)$$

WSCH=Weekly student contact hour(5 classes of 36 students each meeting for 3 hours would generate 540 WSCH)

funded by the A.D.A. formula during this time, the loss of revenues due to class drops and total withdrawing students would have amounted to over a million dollars. During the Fall Semester of 79-80, the revenue loss approximates $1,337,000 (data from positive attendance classes were not available when this report was written).

To simplify, one drop from one three-hour class between census counts costs the district about $100 in lost revenue from the State. It became important to estimate how much WSCH loss was due to students who withdrew completely versus those who merely dropped a class or two but remained in college. The manner in which this was done was to compare student body count change with WSCH change. For example, in Spring 1979, ARC lost 6% of day enrollment between census counts but 17% of WSCH. By the end of the semester, the head count loss reached 9% while WSCH loss increased to 20%. Assuming that a withdrawing student carries an average load, it is possible to estimate how much WSCH loss is due to class drops versus total withdrawals. Total WSCH loss less WSCH loss due to withdrawals leaves WSCH loss due to class drops. WSCH loss converted to revenues can be see by examining Table 1.

The reader may note that evening withdrawals are more pronounced than those in day school. This is due to the fact that dropping one class in the evening is closer to withdrawing than in day school because the average evening load is about 6 units and many students enroll in just one class.

Summing up this financial aspect of attrition, ARC alone lost about $2,532,440 this past year (48% of it due to class drops, 52% due to withdrawals) and this is a conservative estimate. With these financial

facts, the educational implications, and the rather tenuous position of future educational funding in California, I undertook this study to determine the reasons for class drops and withdrawals from ARC.

Once having determined the reasons for class drops and withdrawals, it was hoped that suggestions could be generated as to how the attrition rate might be lowered.

TABLE 1

ESTIMATED LOST REVENUES FROM CLASS DROPS AND TOTAL WITHDRAWALS AT ARC

	SPRING 79		FALL 79	
	DROPS	WITHDRAWALS	DROPS	WITHDRAWALS
DAY	$477,033	250,659	480,589	373,033
EVENING	205,897	262,050	57,981	425,198
TOTAL	$682,930	$512,709	$538,570	$798,231

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE ON CLASS DROPS

Surprisingly, there is not a wealth of literature on why classroom attrition exists. Most research deals with withdrawal from college. For example, the pioneer study (Knoell, 1975) on persistance and performance in California's community colleges did not pursue the question of why students drop their classes.

Thompson (1969) found that most students drop only one class (average 1.53) and that age, sex, and number of courses taken were not related to withdrawal. The most prevalent reasons for dropping were job conflict, lack of interest, wrong program, academic difficulty, and conflict with the teacher.

A study conducted at Roane State Community College (Harriman,Tenn.) in 1975 found that schedules conflicting with work, other classes and other duties accounted for 28% of all drops. Another 19% were due to dissatisfaction of grades, followed by cancellation of classes (no percent given).

Daly and Bateman (1978) followed up each student who had dropped one or more classes at Santa Ana Community College. They found class and work schedule conflict was the major reason (29%) followed by excessive course work (12%), dislike of instructor (9%), family responsibilities (9%), fear of undesirable grade (8%), not liking the class (7%), financial problems (4%), health problems (3%) and transportation problems (3%). The average drop was 3.85 units and 63% dropped 3 or fewer units. Eleven percent dropped over 6 units. Daly and Bateman also report that 81% of those dropping did not add a class to offset the drop, but 31% were firm in wanting to have added a class if one had been available. The authors also report greatest drop rates for classes higher in enroll-

ment (>50). All told, students drop classes for a variety of reasons--36% directly related to the academic program.

Hunter and Sheldon (1979), in a statewide longitudinal study involving many community colleges, found that eight reasons covered most of the factors behind class drops. There were: Job conflict (23%), disliked class content (10%), assignments too heavy (10%), indefinite motivation (10%), unprepared for class (7%), disliked instructor (4%), and class switching (4%). Interestingly, some 40% of the respondents who had left school indicated they would attend occasionally (eg.,on a drop-in/drop-out basis).

Stewart (1978) compared part-time with full-time evening faculty. She reports drop rates of 25% and 21% respectively while finding no differences in attrition between large or small classes.

Finally, Larkin (1977) reports that class drops decreased when non-punitive grading practices were established. Early warning notices did not change retention rates. The author recommends allowing students to drop courses and petition for full or partial credit based on course objectives being met, developing a student contract system, and training faculty to identify student objectives.

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE ON SCHOOL WITHDRAWALS

Bossen and Burnett (1970) have added an optimistic note to decreasing enrollments by claiming that nearly half of all withdrawing students return to college at a later date. Kesselman (1976) adds to the optimism by claiming that most dropouts are really "stopouts" who plan to return. In a nationwide survey, the author reports a 53% dropout rate, but 84% fully expect to get the B.A. degree and 50% plan graduate level work.

Stine (1976) has suggested that going to work and personal problems are the main reason for withdrawing. Bennett (1977) reports lack of finances and heavy employment schedules as being the major reasons.

Employment necessities, financial problems, job conflicts, personal and health factors are reasons for attrition in a study reported by Hinrichsen and Schaumburg (1976). Another study (Wetzel 1977) reports the following reasons for leaving school: transfer to another institution (22%), home or work obligations (12%), financial problems (10%), and moving our of area (9%).

Brunner (1978) found that evening students are twice as likely to drop out as day students (52% to 27%), with the reasons for withdrawal being: goal accomplishment, finances, family-personal considerations, transportation, and job conflicts. Miller (1978) also supports these findings in that non-continuing students at Santa Barbara City College gave the following reasons for withdrawal: completed program (29%), job conflict (16%), personal-financial-medical problems (11%),moved (11%), parking/transportation (7%), and academic reasons (11%).

Daly and Bateman (1978) having determined what reasons are given for class drops, also wanted to know why students withdrew from college. They found that financial/employment conflict was the number one reason (34%), followed by moving (10%), health (11%), personal (11%), transfer to another school (3%), transportation problems (1%), academic reasons (12%) and reasons not given (18%). The authors conclude that greatest effort on the part of the college should be directed toward reducing class drops since most withdrawals are for non-academic reasons.

Flannery (1973), in studying attrition, has made the claim that personalizing instruction reduces attrition. According to the author, the more contact students have with individual faculty members, department chairpersons, and administrators, the more likely they are to be satisfied with their education and to remain in college.

Reimanis (1973) has identified major student factors in attrition: low self-concept of ability, high debilitating anxiety, low internal reinforcement control, and lack of goal and value clarity. That author suggests programs including rap sessions, courses in achievement motivation, locus of control counseling, in-service faculty programs to facilitate student centered classrooms, group counseling for the highly anxious and encounter groups to improve self-concept.

Wenrich, Hanigan and Pflug (1971) also support the notion of individualized help in reducing attrition.

Beal and Noel (1979) have published a booklet under the ACT banner called "What Works in Student Retention." They contend that a positive effect upon attrition is created by: a caring attitude of faculty and staff, high quality teaching, adequate financial aid, student involvement in campus life, and a high quality of advising.

Astin (1975) sums up the attrition situation by suggesting that investment of resources to prevent dropping out may be more "cost effective" than applying the same resources to more vigorous recruitment.

METHODOLOGY

The sampling of students took place near the end of the Fall semester, 1979 at American River College. Because of this fact, a different sampling technique was used. Rather than follow up students who had dropped a class or withdrawn (a costly and time consuming approach), I decided to ask current students why they had dropped another class. Thus, to obtain a sample of students who had dropped a course, several classes were surveyed. To be eligible for inclusion in the class drop study, a student merely had to have stopped attending a class in which he/she was once enrolled at ARC. This definition excluded "no shows" but included all class drops whether initiated by student or faculty; whether the drop was formally processed via a drop card or whether the student simply stopped attending. The students were asked to think of the most recently dropped class as their "target" course when answering the questionnaire.

In examining the reasons for withdrawing from college, the same approach could not be used. Rather, all withdrawal forms for day students have a "reason" section to be filled out sometime before or during the exit interview with a counselor. These were tallied and categorized for all withdrawing students during September through November 1979. Unfortunately, no convenient data collection system existed for withdrawing evening students. Often a single class drop from an evening student meant the person was no longer on campus, whereas this was not the case with day students. Therefore, this report has substantial data on class drops and withdrawals for day students, a lesser amount on evening drops, and nothing about total withdrawal of evening students.

Several classes and times were surveyed in an attempt to get a broad cross section and reasonably representative sample of ARC day and evening students. Data regarding the sample appears on Tables 2 and 3.

Classes with large enrollments were sought for the survey, but seldom was this goal realized. It was typical to find some 54 to 60 percent in attendance and only 36 to 51 percent of those in attendance qualified for the survey. Thus, the research procedure suffered a severe attrition rate (see Table 4).

TABLE 2

COURSES SAMPLED IN CLASS DROP STUDY

Course	Number of Sections	Number of Respondents
Accounting 1B	1	26
Anthropology 1	5	43
Art 10	2	37
Business 18A	2	45
Business 20	5	110
Data Processing 26	3	60
Data Processing 29	1	16
Electronics A	1	13
Electronics 30	1	31
Electronics 53	1	8
Electronics 75	1	2
Electronics 76	2	33
Environmental R. 40	1	11
Health Education	1	16
Math (Gen)	1	22
Math 1	1	20
Music 16	1	31
Political Science 1	5	84
Psychology A	2	16
Psychology 1	13	192
Psychology 2	1	17
Psychology 3	1	5
Psychology 20	1	11
Psychology 24	3	54
Psychology 25	2	60
Psychology 26	1	9
Psychology 34	8	102
Psychology 52	3	29
Recreation 40	2	25
Sociology 1A	3	39
Women In Management	1	7
Totals	76	1174

TABLE 3

CLASS TIMES SAMPLED IN DROP STUDY*

Nearest Starting Hour	Number of Sections	Number of Respondents	
7:00 am	1	9	
8:00 am	10	116	
9:00 am	11	205	
10:00 am	11	209	
11:00 am	9	122	
12:00	7	117	
1:00 pm	7	112	
2:00 pm	1	24	914
5:00 pm	3	36	
6:00 pm	2	24	
7:00 pm	11	122	
8:00 pm	3	78	260*
TOTAL	76	1174	

*260 respondents were in attendance during evening hours, but only 239 were attending evening classes predominantly.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN ATTENDANCE

AT TIME OF SAMPLING, PER FOURTH WEEK CENSUS, COUNT[1]

	% of 4th week census in attendance	% of those in survey from 4th week census	% of those attending who were included in drop study
Evening classes	60	21	36
Day classes	54	28	51
Transfer classes	55	28	52
Non-transfer classes	50	22	43

[1]Data include only full term courses.

Subjects

For the class drop survey, there was a total of 935 day and 239 evening students. All 1174 had dropped at least one class at ARC. Demographic characteristics of these samples appear in Table 5. There are no data on population parameters for students who drop classes. The closest population information includes all students--those who drop and those who have never dropped a course. Compared to this population, the most serious deviation from a representative sample could be in the sampling of transfer students. Anywhere between 30-60% of students on other ARC surveys have indicated plans to obtain a four-year degree. In this sample 70% of the day and 46% of the evening students indicated transfer plans. Thus, there may be under-representation of non-transferring students. There are other slight deviations but none which would invalidate the findings.

There were a total of 591 students who completed withdrawal forms for ARC during September through November, 1979. There are no useful demographic data for this sample due to the fact that the withdrawal forms do not request it. The data could have been retrieved, however, but only by a time consuming and costly process of backtracking through records for each student. For this study, that demographic data were not essential because the main thrust was upon class drops-not withdrawals.

Materials

The survey questionnaire and instructions to the respondent are found in Table 12 in the Appendix. Essentially, the items were generated during hours of brainstorming with students after having looked over other relevant documents dealing with attrition. While my research assistants and I thought the list of reasons exhaustive there was an occasional

student who didn't feel the survey items captured quite the essence of his/her reason for dropping a class. In addition, an instruction sheet for the survey takers appears as Table 13 in the Appendix.

Procedure

A team of 15 students from the author's statistics and introductory psychology classes was recruited for survey taking. Each received a small number of points toward the final grade for participation. Each student was instructed on details such as what to say to the class and how to answer various questions. In all cases, the instructors knew beforehand when the survey was to take place and had given permission to use class time. Data collection began on December 4, 1979 and ended December 12, 1979. This period was after the deadline to drop without a grade (November 9) but well before finals had begun because of the upcoming Christmas break. In terms of a full 18 week semester, data collection took place during the 15th week.

TABLE 5

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF DAY AND EVENING STUDENTS IN CLASS DROP STUDY

Characteristic	Day N=935 %	Evening N=239 %	Total N=1174 %
Sex			
Male	44	42	43
Female	56	58	57
Age			
17 and under	2	1	2
18	21	4	18
19	20	7	18
20	15	7	13
21	8	8	8
22-23	13	11	12
24-26	7	18	9
27-29	4	15	6
30+	10	29	14
Marital Status			
Single (including divorced and widowed)	85	49	78
Married	15	51	22
Racial/Ethnic Background			
Afro-American/Black	6	10	7
Mexican-American/Chicano/Hispanic	4	5	4
Caucasian-American/White	81	76	80
Asian-American/Oriental/Pacific Islander	4	4	4
Native American/American Indian	2	3	2
Other	3	2	3
Units Presently Enrolled			
1/2 to 3	2	24	6
4 - 6	5	40	13
7 - 11	28	23	27
12 - 26	59	12	50
17+	6	1	4
Median	(12.8)	(5.4)	

TABLE 5 (Continued)

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF DAY AND

EVENING STUDENTS IN CLASS DROP STUDY

Characteristic	Day N=935 %	Evening N=239 %	Total N=1174 %
Current Employment Status			
Employed full-time	13	80	27
Employed part-time	55	12	46
Not employed	32	8	27
Primary Purpose in Attending ARC			
Two-year occupational directed program	17	21	18
Occupational certificate program	1	1	1
Eventual transfer to a four year university or college	70	46	65
Take courses of personal interest including those related to employment	9	26	12
NO definite purpose in mind	3	6	4

RESULTS

There were some 30 inappropriately completed answer sheets which were discarded leaving a sample of 953 day and 239 evening students.

In Table 6 are presented data of a general nature concerning class drops. Most students registered on time during the semester in which the drop took place (over 90%), dropped usually one class only (66% day, 75% evening), did not register for extra "filler" classes which they anticipated dropping later (90-94% did not), and most had normal unit loads at the time of the drop (day 13.7 units, evening 8.8 units). Also, the dropped class was registered for (90%) rather than added late during the first few days of classes. Most students did not add another class after dropping (71% day, 88% evening did not), but many indicated they would have added another class if one had been available (41% day, 49% evening). When asked, "If more information had been available about the class beforehand, would you still have enrolled in it?", 45% day and 35% evening said "No" with 15% not sure.

Initially, the 42 possible reasons for dropping classes were analyzed separately for the day and evening samples. While there are some differences between day and evening rankings, they also highly correlate (rho=.88). Because of this fact, the two samples were combined for further analysis. The separate results appear in Table 14 in the Appendix. The combined samples appear in Table 7. The rank orders were generated by assigning a value of 2 to a major reason, 1 to a minor reason and then computing means which were then ranked ordered.

The number one reason was "course content too difficult," followed by "job/course conflicts," "subject matter not what was expected," got

far behind", and "instructor's presentation boring". All 42 rankings along with percentages, appear in Table 7.

To better understand all the diverse information in Table 7, Table 8 was generated which gives a summary of all the rankings by type of item classification. For example, the number one reason for dropping was classified as a course variable, while "instructor's presentation boring" was categorized as an instructor only variable. Since there are 42 possible rankings, one can ask the question; how many course variables were in the top half (rank 21 and lower)? In this case, 6 out of 9 (or 67%) course variable items were ranked in the top half, while 7 out of 8 instructor items were ranked in the top half.

A median test was run on the frequencies of the four categories, resulting in a significant chi-square, $\chi^2(3)=10.16, P<.05$. Translated, this means that the four classifications of items are not distributed evenly between top half and bottom half rankings. The course and instructor items combined (N=17) were ranked in the top half 76% of the time and in the bottom half 24% of the time. On the other hand, non-academic items were ranked above the median in only three instances. All this strongly suggests that students drop classes mainly for course, instructor or other academic reasons rather than for non-academic ones. While this result is far from earth shaking, it does mean that ARC staff can have a high degree of influence over the drop phenomena. This would not be the case if students left classes mainly for non-academic reasons, eg., illness or job.

TABLE 6
GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CLASS DROPS

A drop is defined as "stopped attending a class in which you were once enrolled". Think of the most recent drop and only one drop even though there may be others. Please keep this target class in mind through the remainder of this survey. Target semester refers to semester during which the class was dropped.

ITEMS	DAY STUDENTS PERCENT	EVENING STUDENTS PERCENT	TOTAL PERCENT
1. What was your major reason for enrolling in the target class which you dropped?			
Required for major or transfer general education	64	49	61
Counselor recommended it	8	3	7
Personal interest/an elective	22	38	25
Convenient time for a course	3	7	4
Advice of friends or others	3	3	3
2. Which of the following situations applied to the target course?			
I officially dropped the class by filling out a drop card and either received no grade or received a W	74	64	72
The instructor dropped me and I received no grade or a W	7	8	7
I received an NC grade (No credit)	6	9	7
I received an F grade (failing)	3	5	3
Not sure or other	10	14	11
3. Did you register late (after official period closes) for the semester in which the drop took place?			
Yes	7	8	7
No	92	90	92
Not sure	1	2	1
4. Apart from the target class you dropped how many other classes did you drop or stop attending during the target semester?			
None	66	75	68
One	19	13	18
Two	8	4	7
Three	5	5	5
Four or more	2	3	2
5. Some students practice a policy of signing up for extra classes knowing that they will eventually drop one or two. Did this apply in your case during the target semester:			
Yes	10	6	9
No	90	94	91

TABLE 6(CONTINUED)
GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CLASS DROPS

ITEMS	DAY STUDENTS N=953%	EVENING STUDENTS N=239%	TOTAL N=1174%
6. During the target semester, what was the highest number of units you were enrolled in at any one time?			
2 units or less	2	4	3
3 - 5 units	3	18	6
6 - 8 units	5	26	9
9 - 11 units	10	17	11
12 - 14 units	40	22	36
15 - 17 units	29	5	24
18 - 20 units	10	7	9
21 - 23 units	1	1	1
24 or more units	0 (<1)	0 (<1)	1
7. After you dropped out of the target class, did you later add another class during the same semester?			
Yes	29	12	26
No	71	88	74
8. If you answered "no" to the above question, please answer this item. If not, leave blank. Is it likely that you would have added another class if one was available that met your interest and time availability?			
Yes	41	49	44
No	45	35	41
Not sure	14	16	15
9. If you had known more about the target class beforehand, is it likely that you would still have enrolled in it?			
Yes	41	49	43
No	45	35	43
Not sure	14	16	15
10. Did you initially register for the target class or did you add it during the first few days of the target semester?			
Registered for it	90	87	90
Added it	10	13	10

TABLE 7
REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS
COMBINED DAY AND EVENING SAMPLES- N=1174

ITEM	RANK ORDER	MAJOR REASON (PERCENT)	MINOR REASON (PERCENT)	NOT A REASON (PERCENT)
Course content was too difficult	1	23	22	55
Conflict between demands of job and course	2	22	20	58
Subject matter was not what I expected	3	21	21	58
Got too far behind in course work	4	21	22	57
Instructor's presentation boring	5	23	17	60
Too much homework	6	20	22	58
Subject matter not interesting to me	7	18	23	59
Instructor went too fast	8	16	19	65
Inadequate study habits	9	14	23	63
Dissatisfied with my grade	10	17	16	67
Course tests too difficult/ unfair/upsetting	11	16	16	68
Instructor impersonal/ little concern for the individual	12	15	15	70
Instructor's presentation disorganized	13	15	14	71
Health/personal reasons (including physical health emotional health or interpersonal problems)	14	15	14	71
Instructor spent too much time on irrelevant subjects	15	15	10	75

TABLE 7 (CONTINUED)
REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS:
COMBINED DAY AND EVENING SAMPLE - N=1174

ITEM	RANK ORDER	MAJOR REASON (PERCENT)	MINOR REASON (PERCENT)	NOT A REASON (PERCENT)
Instructor biased toward one point of view	16	13	11	76
Instructor unfriendly/ unapproachable	17	12	12	76
Time conflict with outside interests (other than employment)	18	9	16	75
Disliked time when class starts (too early or too late)	19	9	15	76
Experienced class scheduling problems	20	11	10	79
Did not have prerequisite or necessary background skill	21	10	13	77
Family responsibilities too great	22	8	12	80
Learned that I did not need the course	23	8	10	82
Grading practice unfair	24	8	10	82
Class meeting time lasted too long	25	5	12	83
Changed my major or career plans	26	7	8	85
Looking for employment	27	5	10	85
Felt alone or isolated	28	4	12	84
Course was not challenging	29	5	10	85
Cost of transportation	30	3	8	89

TABLE 7 (CONTINUED)
REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS:
COMBINED DAY AND EVENING SAMPLE- N=1174

ITEM	RANK ORDER	MAJOR REASON (PERCENT)	MINOR REASON (PERCENT)	NOT A REASON (PERCENT)
Instructor went too slow	31	5	5	90
Could not afford books and supplies	32	3	8	89
Difficulty in obtaining transportation	33	3	7	90
Already had a course similar to this	34	4	5	91
Housekeeping responsibilities	35	2	9	89
Felt prejudice towards me	36	4	12	84
Illness of child or other member of your family	37	4	4	92
Did not like size of class	38	3	7	90
Child care was not available or too costly	39	4	3	93
Unable to go on required field trips	40	2	5	93
Had to shift from day school to night school or vice versa	41	3	3	94
Personal security/ safety on this campus	42	1	3	96

TABLE 8

SUMMARY OF RANKS

BY TYPE OF ITEM CLASSIFICATION

Specific Course Variables	Instructor Only Variables	Study skill Goals Scheduling Other academia	Non-academic Variables
1	5	4	2
3	8	9	14
6	12	19	18
7	13	20	22
10	15	21	27
11	16	23	28
24	17	25	30
29	31	26	33
40		32	35
		34	36
		38	37
			39
			41
			42
N=9	N=8	N=11	N=14
6/9 above Median 67%	7/8 above Median 88%	5/11 above Median 45%	3/14 above Median 21%

Appearing in Table 9 are the major reasons why students completely withdraw from ARC. The number one reason given was "job/school conflicts or finding a job". The second reason was "moving out of area." In total, only some 4% of the reasons were academically related. Since 10% did not give a reason and another 9% were deemed "personal", the 4% figure may be a bit low. Nevertheless, the data suggest that students do not withdraw mainly for academic reasons. This is just the opposite from the findings for class drops. Thus, it would appear that if ARC selects reducing attrition as an institutional goal, energy should be expended mostly on reducing class drops.

TABLE 9

WHY STUDENTS WITHDRAW FROM ALL CLASSES AT ARC

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1979

REASON	N=591	%
Financial/employment (seeking or found employment, military, conflict with school schedule)	237	40
Moving out of area	85	14
Illness/health (self or family)	75	13
Personal	52	9
Attending or transferring to another school	24	4
Academic problems (lost interest, scheduling, got behind, too many units, couldn't get classes, courses too difficult)	24	4
Transportation problems	9	1
Cannot stay full semester	6	1
Family responsibilities	6	1
Other (Non-academic) (pregnancy, death, child care, jury duty marriage, legal problems)	16	3
Reason not given	57	10
TOTAL	591	100%

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Table 10 appear the ranks of various reasons that other authors have given for class drops. Partial data from this study is also included for comparison purposes. While each classification of reasons varies among authors, some commonality can be observed. Note that "conflicts with work" rank highly among all authors. Of the 14 reasons cited in other research, 10 of those 14 were ranked above the median in this study. Of the 14 reasons, 9 are academic related. The findings of other researchers, then, are not at variance with the findings here.

Table 11 compares the present findings on withdrawing students with those of other authors. In accord with this study is the conclusion that students withdraw primarily for non-academic reasons--something the colleges have little control over.

TABLE 10

SUMMARY OF SELECTED RESEARCH ARTICLES

ON WHY STUDENTS DROP CLASSES

REASON	ROANE ST. CC (1975) RANKS	THOMPSON (1969) RANKS	DALY (1978) RANKS	HUNTER (1979) RANKS	RASOR (1980) RANKS
Conflicts w/ work	1	1	1	1	2
Dissatisfied w/grade	2				10
Lack of interest		2		4	7
Wrong program		3			23
Academic difficulty		4			4
Conflict w/ teacher		5	3	6	5,8,12
Excessive course work			2	3	1,6
Family responsibilities			4		22
Undesirable grade			5		10
Did not like class			6	2	
Financial			7		27,32
Health			8		14
Transportation			9		33
Unprepared				5	9,21

TABLE 11

SUMMARY OF SELECTED RESEARCH ARTICLES

ON WHY STUDENTS WITHDRAW FROM COLLEGE

REASON	RASOR (1980) RANKS	DALY (1978) RANKS	MILLER (1978) RANKS	WETZEL (1977) RANKS	BENNETT (1977) RANKS	HINRICHSEN (1976) RANKS	STINE (1976) RANKS	BRUNNER (1978) RANKS
Financial/employment	1	1	2	2.5	1	1	1	2
Moving from area	2	4	4.5	4				
Illness/health	3	5.5	[4.5]			[2]		3
Personal	5	5.5					2	
Transferring to another College	6.5	7		1				
Academic problems	6.5	3	7					
Transportation	9	8	6					4
Cannot stay full term	10.5							
Family/home obligations	10.5			2.5				
Other (non-academic)	8		3					
Not given	4	2						
Completed program			1					1

Upon consideration of the findings in this study along with conclusions reached by other research, a number of recommendations are made. Before each recommendation section are the specific item results that lead to that recommendation. Thus, the first item results are that "course content too difficult" ranked first in a list of 42 and was endorsed as a major reason or minor reason for dropping by 45% of the 1174 respondents.

1. Course Variables

Course content too difficult - rank 1 (45%)

Too much homework - rank 6 (42%)

RECOMMENDATION

Instructors reevaluate the difficulty level of their courses and the amount of homework assigned. The majority of students work (68% day - 92% evening) and these rates will probably climb due to increasing economic pressures. Two hours homework for every hour in class is an arbitrary value from an unknown source.

2. Course Variables

Course content too difficult - rank 1 (45%)

Subject matter not interesting to me -rank 7 (41%)

Did not have prerequisite or necessary background skill - rank 21 (23%)

RECOMMENDATION

Priority be given to development of an assessment center or an assesment function in which students can take a battery of tests for placement counseling. (See reference: Baker, 1980) Also, near the first day of class, faculty could review all requirements and prerequisites for their classes.

3. Non-academic Variable

Conflict between demands of job and course - rank 2 (42%)

RECOMMENDATION

Faculty maximize the ease of transferring a student from one section to another (either within the same instructor's sections or between different instructors). Block scheduling could be considered with certain courses to allow students to attend classes in the area in multiple hour blocks so as to enable the student to finish sooner and get to the job market (See reference:Baker, 1980). Certain courses could be modularized into one-unit packages. If a student did have to drop a course, he/she might receive partial credit based upon completing certain objectives (See reference: Larkin, 1977). It would also be highly desirable to have several short-term courses starting at different points throughout the semester. Between 41 to 49 percent of students who dropped a class responded that they would have added another class if one had been available.

4. Course and other Academic Variables

Subject matter not what I expected - rank 3 (42%)

"If more had been known about the class beforehand, would you still have enrolled in it?" (43% responded "No").

Learned that I did not need the class - rank 23 (18%)

Already had a course similar to this - rank 34 (9%)

RECOMMENDATION

More preregistration information to students about classes and instructors is needed. A standardized information form could be

used by interested faculty for each course taught. These could then be bound and made available to students. Included in the form could be a detailed description of the teaching approach, content, estimated cost of materials, grade requirements, criteria for grading, and distribution of all letter grades given in the course during the most recent semester by each specific instructor. There might also be an evaluation of the course by past students.

5. Instructor Variables

Instructor's presentation boring - rank 5 (40%)

Subject matter not interesting - rank 7 (42%)

Instructor went too fast - rank 8 (35%)

Instructor's presentation disorganized - rank 13 (29%)

Instructor spent too much time on irrelevant subjects - rank 15 (25%)

Instructor biased toward one point of view - rank 16 (24%)

Instructor went too slow - rank 31 (10%)

RECOMMENDATION

Faculty periodically ask for student feedback about their lectures, pace, and course organization. A teaching resources center (run by faculty) could provide a valuable evaluation service, eg., videotaping a lecture (a Teaching Resource Center is currently being considered). Also, faculty might consider for use in the classroom other support materials and services, eg., A/V, as well as different teaching approaches to supplement conventional lecture. Previous research suggests that students retain only a few main points from lecture and that most lose interest well before an hour of total lecturing.

6. Course and Study Skill Variables

Got too far behind in course work - rank 4 (43%)

Course tests too difficult/unfair/upsetting - rank 11 (38%)

RECOMMENDATION

Faculty assess students more frequently than the traditional mid-terms and final. Smaller, more frequent tests or evaluation provide more reliable data of student performance and less student anxiety over "blowing the big test," or "studying the wrong thing." Frequent monitoring of student achievement also helps to reduce student procrastination. It is also recommended that faculty be made aware of those factors contributing to debilitating test anxiety (do-it-yourself methods of reducing test anxiety are available to students on tape through our library reserve desk).

To help reduce student complaints about tests, many approaches can be helpful. Students must know what will be covered and how to prepare. Faculty can avoid making students unduly anxious about exams by not using time pressure (too many items for the class period), including some humor on tests to help relieve stress, and allowing repeats to improve performance. The tests should sample the full range of course content, not just obscure details. Objective tests can be item-analyzed by computer to ensure validity. Finally, faculty can avoid differentiating letter grades on the basis of insignificant point differences by recording points all semester instead of a set of letter grades.

7. Study Skills Variable

Inadequate study habits - rank 9 (37%)

RECOMMENDATION

Faculty inform students about study habits for their particular courses and go over these in some detail. Note that Psychology 52-Effective Study Skills (one unit) is taught first and second nine weeks. A student handout on effective study habits is available from Dick Rasor, Psychology Department, ARC.

8. Course Variables

Dissatisfied with my grade - rank 10 (33%)

Course tests too difficult/unfair/upsetting -rank 11 (32%)

Grading practice unfair - rank 24 (18%)

RECOMMENDATION

Faculty might consider the merits of non-competitive grading in place of using the "curve." The attainment of a specific grade can be based upon certain objectives being met,(eg., a predetermined number of points). This amounts to a student contract system. Under such a system, if all students meet the objectives, all would earn "A's." There would be no limited number. Larkin (1977) found that non-punitive grading decreased class drops. Undoubtedly, there are philosophical differences among faculty over non-punitive grading, and a case could be made for the merits of the "W," "NC," or "F" grade. The questions prompted are: What does the educational institution, the faculty, or the student really gain by a punitive grade? Might not receiving a "C" or higher be punitive enough? Do faculty also need to tack on to the student's record a grade of "F" which mathematically subtracts from previous accomplishments? There is also tremendous variation in grading practices among faculty who teach the same course. Thus, the particular section that a student registers for is related to the probability of receiving a specific grade.

9. Instructor and Non-academic Variables

Instructor impersonal/little concern for the individual -rank 12 (30%)

Instructor unfriendly/unapproachable - rank 17 (24%)

Felt alone or isolated - rank 28 (16%)

Felt prejudice towards me - rank 36 (16%)

RECOMMENDATION

Faculty could ask students for feedback on whether an impersonal atmosphere exists in their classroom. Faculty workshops or less formal get-togethers could focus on personalizing the educational process without lowering standards. Research by Beal & Noel (1979), Flannery (1973), and Reimanis (1973) suggest that increasing friendly contacts between faculty (administration or staff) and students reduces attrition.

10. Other Academic Variable

Could not afford books and supplies - rank 32 (11%)

RECOMMENDATION

The above stated reason was not highly ranked by the total number of respondents, yet 130 students dropped a class because of the expense involved. It is recommended that faculty know exactly the entire costs associated with each of their courses. Departments can determine whether there is wide cost variation among different instructors within the same course. This reason for drops probably will increase with inflation. Faculty aware of financial problems could also refer students to the Financial Aids office.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

ARC form an ad hoc committee whose purpose shall be to help the college improve student retention. Study and analysis of institutional data needs to be on going to assess the effectiveness of various retention strategies. As students drop classes, they can be requested to fill out a questionnaire indicating their reasons for doing so. These data can then be sorted by instructor and returned to faculty members at the end of the semester, thereby giving them some feedback. Furthermore, modification of curriculum can be examined in light of existing drop rates. Innovative ideas like short-term courses, dual track numbering for certain courses (transfer, non transfer) all might help to reduce drops and better meet student needs.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 12

AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE

SURVEY ON REASONS FOR CLASS DROPS

The Research and Development Office at ARC is conducting this survey in order to better understand why students drop classes. We are asking you to assist us by completing the attached questionnaire. Hopefully, this information will determine if and how ARC can provide better services for its students.

All survey respondents will remain anonymous. No class, instructor, or person will be identified. You will be answering questions about a particular class you "dropped." A drop is defined within the following situation: you stopped attending a class in which you were once enrolled. This does not include being a "no show" (never having attended). It does not matter whether you officially dropped, were dropped by an instructor, or received a no-credit or failing grade for non-attendance. The dropped or "target" class may be one you enrolled in this semester or within the last year or so. Please think of your most recent drop when answering the questions. If you have never dropped out of a course at ARC, please do not complete the survey. Also, if you have already taken part in this study, do not complete a second questionnaire.

On the General Purpose NCS Answer Sheet, please use a black lead pencil. Make heavy black marks that fill the circle completely. Erase cleanly any answer you wish to change. Make no stray marks on the answer sheet. Do not use ink or ballpoint pens.

Finally, do not fill out any information on the left side of the answer sheet (example: no name, no birthdate, etc.).

Thank you very much for your participation. A summary of the results will be given your instructor and will be available at the Research Office in the Administration Building. The results will also be printed in the Beaver.

Richard A. Rasor
Research Coordinator

RR/fm
11/28/79

Attachment

Questionnaire

Survey on Reasons for Class Drops
Fall, 1979

Current Background information

1. Sex

   A. Male
   B. Female

2. Age(please answer only item 2 or 3 - not both)

   A. 17 and under
   B. 18
   C. 19
   D. 20
   E. 21

3. Age (continued - answer only item 2 or 3 - not both)

   A. 22-23
   B. 24-26
   C. 27-29
   D. 30-39
   E. 40 and over

4. Marital Status

   A. Single (including divorced and widowed)
   B. Married

5. Racial/Ethnic Background

   A. Afro-American/Black
   B. Mexican-American/Chicano/Hispanic
   C. Caucasian-American/White
   D. Asian-American/Oriental/Pacific Islander
   E. Native American/American Indian
      (If none of the above are appropriate, leave this item blank)

6. When do you attend most of your classes?

   A. Day
   B. Evening

7. How many units are you presently enrolled in?

   A. 1/2 to 3
   B. 4 - 6
   C. 7 - 11
   D. 12 - 16
   E. 17 or more

8. What is your primary purpose in attending ARC?

   A. Two-year occupational directed program
   B. An occupational certificate program (usually one year)
   C. Eventual transfer to a four-year university or college
   D. Take courses of personal interest including those related to employment
   E. No definite purpose in mind

9. Current employment status

   A. Employed full-time
   B. Employed part-time
   C. Not employed

Information about class drop

Recall that a drop is defined as "stopped attending a class in which you were once enrolled." Think of the most recent drop and only one drop even though there may be others. Please keep this target class in mind throughout the remainder of this survey. Target semester refers to semester during which the class was dropped.

10. What was your major reason for enrolling in the target class which you dropped?

   A. Required for major or transfer general education
   B. Counselor recommended it
   C. Personal interest/an elective
   D. Convenient time for a course
   E. Advice of friends or others

11. Which of the following situations applied to the target course

   A. I officially dropped the class by filling out a drop card and either received no grade or received a W
   B. The instructor dropped me and I received no grade or a W
   C. I received an NC grade (no credit)
   D. I received an F grade (failing)
   E. Not sure or other

12. Did you register late (after official period closes) for the semester in which the drop took place?

   A. Yes
   B. No
   C. Not sure

13. Apart from the target class you dropped, how many other classes did you drop or stop attending during the target semester?

   A. None
   B. 1
   C. 2
   D. 3
   E. 4 or more

14. Some students practice a policy of signing up for "extra" classes knowing that they will eventually drop one or two. Did this apply in your case during the target semester?

A. Yes
B. No

15. During the target semester, what was the highest number of units you were enrolled in at any one time? (Answer either Question 15 or 16 but not both.)

A. 2 units or less
B. 3 - 5 units
C. 6 - 8 units
D. 9 - 11 units
E. 12 - 14 units (see item 16 for continuation)

16. Item 15 continued (answer either Question 15 or 16 but not both)

A. 15 - 17 units
B. 18 - 20 units
C. 21 - 23 units
D. 24 or more units

17. After you dropped out of the target class, did you later add another class during the same semester?

A. Yes
B. No

If you answered "no" to Question 17, please answer Question 18. If not, leave blank.

18. Is it likely that you would have added another class if one was available that met your interest and time availability?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Not sure

19. If you had known more about the target class beforehand, is it likely that you would still have enrolled in it?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Not sure

Listed below are a number of reasons why a student might drop out of a class. Please indicate whether each of these reasons listed was a major reason (mark choice "A"), a minor reason (mark choice "B"), or not a reason (mark choice "C") for your dropping the target class.

20. Child care was not available or too costly

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

21. Illness of child or other member of your family

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

22. Housekeeping responsibilities

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

23. Family responsibilities too great

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

24. Health/personal reasons (including physical health, emotional health or interpersonal problems)

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

25. Personal security/safety on this campus

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

26. Difficulty in obtaining transportation

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

27. Had to shift from day school to night school or vice versa

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

28. Cost of transportation

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

29. Could not afford books/supplies

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

30. Looking for employment

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

31. Conflict between demands of job and course

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

32. Learned that I did not need the course

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

33. Dissatisfied with my grade

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

34. Felt prejudice towards me

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

35. Felt alone or isolated

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

36. Unable to go on required field trips

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

37. Subject matter not interesting to me

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

38. Subject matter was not what I expected

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

39. Course content was too difficult

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

40. Course was not challenging

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

41. Too much homework

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

42. Course tests too difficult/unfair/upsetting

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

43. Grading practice unfair

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

44. Experienced class scheduling problems

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

45. Class meeting time lasted too long

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

46. Did not like size of class

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

47. Inadequate study habits

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

48. Did not have prerequisite or necessary background skill

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

49. Already had a course similar to this

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

50. Changed my major or career plans

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

51. Disliked time when class starts (too early or too late)

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

52. Got too far behind in course work

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

53. Time conflict with outside interests (other than employment)

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

54. Instructor went too fast

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

55. Instructor went too slow

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

56. Instructor unfriendly/unapproachable

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

57. Instructor's presentation disorganized

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

58. Instructor biased toward one point of view

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

59. Instructor's presentation boring

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

60. Instructor spent too much time on irrelevant subjects

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

61. Instructor impersonal/little concern for the individual

A. Major reason
B. Minor reason
C. Not a reason

62. Finally, did you initially register for the target class or did you add it during the first few days of the target semester?

A. Registered for it
B. Added it

Thank you.

TABLE 13

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE STUDENT DROP SURVEY

These are your detailed instructions. Please read this over carefully. Reread it prior to your appointment.

Having signed up for surveying a particular class, please fill out the top part of the TALLY SHEET for each class you will be surveying. This will serve as your appointment card.

1. Before conducting the survey, take it yourself. This will acquaint you with the questionnaire answer sheet and general questions that people may have.

2. Find where the room is long before your appointed time. I suggest a full day before. I have made appointments with instructors for apecific time periods. Being late because you are searching for the room will not win friends. There is a map at the 3rd floor, Davies Hall, Conference room D, ("The Drop Zone").

3. Long before your appointment come to the third floor of Davies Hall outside the Behavioral Science Office and acquaint yourself with the materials. (Drop Zone). This includes questionnaires, answer sheets, pencils, rubber bands, paper clips, and extra tally sheets. Do not take any materials at this time. This is just to learn where things will be.

4. Shortly before your appointment time (1/2 hour) come and get your necessary materials. Come no earlier because other people may still have questionnaires to turn in from their appointments. We are surveying over 2,000 with 500 questionnaires. In the mean time, count out the answer sheets you'll need and take along some pencils (figure 1/3 will need a pencil).

5. When entering the room at the designated time, look for the instructor, and greet him/her. Introduce yourself, tell that you're conducting the survey for Dr. Rasor. (Each instructor knows someone is coming, but exactly when may have been forgotten.) Ask the instructor when to start your introduction to the class. Remember the instructor runs the show! Lay out your supplies and introduce yourself to the students, SMILE! Tell them that ARC Research Office is conducting a survey on why students drop classes -- any classes, and that you need their cooperation, also tell them that no names will be on the answer sheets. If possible have the instructor help you hand out materials (this will speed things up and make it appear the instructor wants them to participate). During your short presentation, there may be questions. Answer each one to the best of your ability. Most questions will be answered by reading the first sheet of the questionnaire--so be familiar with it.

6. Depending upon the seating arrangement, devise a speedy system of distributing materials. Pass the booklets first. Do not go around and hand something to each student -- that is the slowest way. In retrieving the materials, ask students to raise their hands when finished -- then collect the materials individually. In very large sections (e.g. 80+) this procedure may not be the best. You might ask the instructor how he/she does it. One way would be to have all materials retained until everyone is finished. Then pass bokklets (either to the right or forward) followed by the answer sheets and then the pencils.

7. Remember to thank the students again and the instructor too, also don't forget to count heads and put the total on the TALLY SHEETS.

8. Return all materials to Davies Hall, 3rd floor (The Drop Zone) unless, of course, you're off to another immediate appointment. Put the booklets back in the box. Fill out the TALLY SHEET and use either a clip or rubber band, attach the Tally Sheet to the answer sheets. Deposit them in the box marked COMPLETED ANSWER SHEETS. Before you do this however, look over your answer sheets and face them all the same way (you can do this while counting them). I will look over the answer sheets again to make sure the computer will process them.

9. If you experience any difficulties, you can call Dick Rasor at 484-8427 or 944-1447.

10. Good luck--it should be fun!

DICK RASOR

TABLE 14

REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS: DAY AND EVENING STUDENTS

REASONS FOR DROPPING A CLASS								
DAY STUDENTS DATA N = 935					EVENING STUDENTS DATA N = 239			
RANK ORDER	MAJOR REASON (%)	MINOR REASON (%)	NOT A REASON (%)	ITEM	RANK ORDER	MAJOR REASON (%)	MINOR REASON (%)	NOT A REASON (%)
1	26	22	52	Course content too difficult	9.5	14	21	65
2	21	23	56	Too much homework	7	16	19	65
3	21	24	55	Got too far behind in course work	5	20	15	65
4	21	22	57	Subject matter not what I expected	2	22	19	59
5	22	20	58	Conflict between demands of job and course	1	23	20	57
6	23	17	59	Instructor's presentation boring	3	21	19	59
7	19	23	59	Subject matter not interesting to me	9.5	13	21	65
8	19	18	63	Dissatisfied with my grade	21	8	11	81
9	17	20	63	Instructor went too fast	13.5	12	18	70
10	18	17	65	Course tests too difficult/ unfair/upsetting	18	8	14	78
11	14	24	62	Inadequate study habits	11	14	18	68
12	15	14	71	Instructor impersonal/little concern for the individual	12	14	17	69
13	13	14	73	Instructor's presentation disorganized	6	20	15	66
14	13	13	74	Health/personal reasons (including physical health, emotional health or interpersonal problems	4	21	15	64
15.5	12	13	75	Instructor unfriendly/unapproachable	17	12	9	79

RANK ORDER	MAJOR REASON (%)	MINOR REASON (%)	NOT A REASON (%)	ITEM	RANK ORDER	MAJOR REASON (%)	MINOR REASON (%)	NOT A REASON (%)
15.5	14	9	78	Instructor spent too much time on irrelevant subjects	8	19	12	69
17	13	11	76	Instructor biased toward one point of view	15	15	12	74
18	10	16	74	Disliked time when class starts (too early or too late)	23	5	14	82
19	12	11	77	Experienced class scheduling problems	22	8	9	83
20	11	13	77	Did not have prerequisite or necessary background skill	20	7	13	80
21	8	15	77	Time conflict with outside interests (other than employment)	13.5	13	16	71
22	9	11	80	Learned that I did not need the course	34	3	8	90
23	9	10	82	Grading practice unfair	26.5	5	10	86
24	8	11	81	Family responsibilities too great	16	11	15	74
25	8	8	85	Changed my major or career plans	30	5	8	87
26	6	11	83	Looking for employment	36	3	7	90
27	5	11	84	Class meeting time lasted too long	19	8	15	78
28	4	12	84	Felt alone or isolated	28	4	10	86
29	4	9	86	Course was not challenging	24	5	11	84
30	3	8	89	Cost of transportation	31	3	10	87
31	4	5	91	Already had a course similar to this	39	3	5	92
32.5	3	7	90	Difficulty in obtaining transportation	34	3	8	89

RANK ORDER	MAJOR REASON (%)	MINOR REASON (%)	NOT A REASON (%)	ITEM	RANK ORDER	MAJOR REASON (%)	MINOR REASON (%)	NOT A REASON (%)
32.5	4	6	90	Felt predjudice towards me	38	3	6	92
34	2	8	90	Housekeeping responsibilities	29	4	11	85
35	2	8	90	Could not afford books/ supplies	26.5	4	10	85
36	4	4	92	Illness of child or other family member	32	6	2	92
37	4	4	92	Instructor went too slow	25	7	7	86
38	2	7	91	Did not like size of class	34	4	6	90
39	4	3	93	Child care was not available or too costly	42	3	2	95
40	2	5	94	Unable to go on required field trips	37	3	5	92
41	3	3	95	Had to shift from day school to night school or vice versa	40	3	3	93
42	1	3	96	Personal security/safety on this campus	41	2	6	92

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